

The Link between Leaders' Wasteful Management Practices and Employees' Engagement

(A Case study of Deber Tabor Hospital, Ethiopia)

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to assess the perception of medics of their superiors' wasteful managerial practices and their own engagement to the hospital. All medical staff of Debr-Teabor Hospital, South Gondar, Ethiopia was taken as a sample of the study and 73 percent of them participated in the study. Adapted standard instruments were used to measure both variables. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test its reliability. The result of the study shows that about 47 percent of respondents confirmed the manifestation of wasteful managerial practices. If these figures are an accurate representation of employee behavior, it means that energy and enthusiasm of 85 percent of medical staff (a tremendous amount) are not available to their Hospital. They are disengaged or are not engaged. Wasteful Managerial Practices has significant negative relationship with Employee engagement ($r = -.372^{**}$) and it explained only 12.2 percent of the variation in Employees' Engagement. Regarding to components of Wasteful Managerial Practice only "Confusing message" and "Hypocrisy" are significantly and negatively correlated with "Employee Engagement".

Key words: Wasteful Managerial Practices, Engagement, no Engagement, Disengagement

Introduction

In most of organizations, leaders' perform wasteful management practices which do not contribute to organization's objectives (Gupta & B, 1992). These wasteful practices are mostly unproductive and occur slowly and silently. However, leaders fail to recognize and control them (Ibid). Employee emotional exhaustion is common in many organizations (Maslach, Schaufelli, & Leiter, 2001). Consequently, researchers have been studying correlates and consequences of employees' emotional engagement for decades. It is further understood that employee emotional detachment has a negative impact not only upon individual workers but upon entire organizations, including other organization's employees and the people they serve (Garner, Knight, & Simpson, 2007). However, although there is a growing body of literature that describes how good leadership practices and employees' feel belongingness contribute to the overall success of an organization. There is none or few academic and empirical researches are done about the effect of leader's wasteful managerial practices on employee engagement. Therefore, this descriptive study is designed to assess the extent and relations among leaders' Wasteful Managerial Practices, level of employee Engagement particularly in DebreTabor Hospital, Ethiopia.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine the extent of leaders' Wasteful Managerial practices and its impact on employees' engagement.

The specific objectives are

1. To assess the extent of Wasteful Managerial practices (in terms of organizational politics, confusing message, unproductive meetings, hypocrisy, and withholding information)
2. To Identify the level of employees engagement in the Hospital;
3. To assess the effect of leaders' Wasteful Managerial practices on employees' engagement;

Literature Review

Wasteful Managerial Malpractice

Good collection of small efforts that leader should follow to the best of his ability for his organization are Best Management Practices (BMPs). Each practice will take only a small investment in time and/or money to implement it <http://www.pprc.org>. However, in the majority of organizations, management practices, which do not contribute to the achievement of organization's objectives are common. Such practices are wasteful. But people fail to recognize and control them. Quite often these practices are taken for granted as a normal feature of organizational life (Gupta, 1992). According to Denis Donovan, (nd), *Waste* means to expend uselessly; to squander; to neglect. *Practice* – performance or execution, as opposed to theory; custom or habit. Placing these terms together gives *Wasteful practices* which mean to habitually squander or neglect. In terms of organization operations, wasteful practices occur so frequently that we become blind to them. They are “custom or habit” (Ibid). According to Gupta, (1992), the basic cause of Wasteful Management practice is that individuals tend to pursue their own personal objectives without contributing to organizational goals. In this study, Wasteful Management practice is treated in terms of *organizational politics, confusing message, unproductive meetings, hypocrisy, and withholding information*. These dimensions are the most common counterproductive practices that have crept into an organization and come part of its normal operations. These counterproductive practices or demodulators exist because they are allowed to and they remain because little has been done about them (Ibid). These wasteful practices in work places are briefly presented below.

Organizational politics: Organizational politics is actions by individuals, which are directed toward the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others or their organization (Kacmar and Baron, 1999). This behavior was frequently associated with manipulation, defamation, subversiveness, and illegitimate way of overusing power to attain one's objectives (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Organizational politics is a general method for getting things and using power for personal gain in an organization (Barton, et al., 1999). It usually operates according to unwritten rules of success that send subtle, ambiguous and anxiety-producing messages to employees about politically “correct” behaviors such as whom to fear, whom to appraise, whom to avoid, whom to blame (Ibid). It involves competition for owner, for influence, and favor and of course promotions. Employees are too scared to go against their own bosses, even when they know that their bosses are wrong and they have feasible and sometimes brilliant ideas to improve productivity. This is why there is no innovation and status quos remains for years, producing inefficient and ineffective (Barton et al., 1999).

Confusing message: Managers must hold nothing back of interest to employees except those very few items that are absolutely confidential. But in reality one of the most counterproductive rules in organizations is distributing information selectively and do not make their expectations known. This creates a huge. Workers' frustrate with the absence of adequate communication (Barton, et al., (1999). The problem with confusing messages is that after a while, workers realize that when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority; they waste large amount of energy and time working on the wrong task, accomplishing the wrong results, and becoming extremely frustrated in the processes and de-motivated (Ibid).

Unproductive meeting: Meetings are vital to corporate success and no one is against them. But in reality most practices show that managers in organizations attend too many meeting weekly which sometimes become a reason for resentment in the part of the managers as well as employees (Hackman & Johensin,

2004). Meetings provide a controlling factor in achieving the organizational objectives. But they can be major wasteful management practices when the attendees have nothing except being a part in the room to listen the leader on what he wants, and does not want any feedback or opinion. Most meetings are poorly planned and ineptly led anyone with responsible must make meeting short and satisfying (Ibid)

Hypocrisy: Hypocrites are people who publicly uphold strict moral norms; expecting and demanding others to follow them, but who privately violate these espoused standards in their own behavior Valdesolo, P., & DeSteno, D. (2007) and Adam, D. et.al nd). Hypocrisy is the discrepancy between what respondents think is normative and how they actually behave. The discrepancy between what respondents believe other people should do and what they actually would do themselves in such a situation (Batson & Thompson, 2001).

Withholding information: some managers feel powerful by not sharing information with their staffs. They do not take the time or care enough to pass on the information the staff need to know, or they deliberately hold back information (Barton, et al, 1999).

Employee engagement

Employee engagement has been defined using many different ways. for example, Employee engagement was identified as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Wellins and Concelman 2005). The Gallup Organization,(2006), defines engaged employees as those who, “work with a passion and feel a profound connection to their company” and “drive innovation and move the organization forward. The talent study of Towers Perrin,(2003), used the following names for types of employees; level of engagement, highly engaged, moderately engaged, and *disengaged*. According to Towers Perrin, moderately engaged employees demonstrated signs of disengagement, providing from neutral to negative points of view about their company, but in some areas they were quite positive. For the purposes of this study, the following definition and characterization of engagement of the Gallup Organization (2006) are used. *Engaged employees*, who do their job with passion and enthusiasm and who are aware of being strongly connected to their organization. They provide emotional and physical input to the company's performance and development, and facilitate onward movement; *Not-engaged employees* who are actually “checked out”. They put their time into their work, but there is no energy, passion or enthusiasm from their side; it looks like “sleepwalking” during the workday; and *disengaged employees*, who are unhappy at work and who spend their working time actively acting out this feeling. The negative influence of such workers constantly affects other people and destroys achievements of engaged workmates are used.

Methods of Study

Population and Sample: The population of the study is 74, the total of medical staffs of Debreabor Hospital, South Gondar, Ethiopia. Questionnaires were distributed to all 74 medical staffs, and 54 workable questionnaires were returned.

The study instruments: To measure “*Wasteful Management practices*” an instrument, containing 22 items is developed from literatures of (C.B.Gupta, 1992, C.N.parkinson, 1957, Barton,et al,1999, Hackman & Johansen, 2004). The item was presented to the respondents as a statement to which they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree along a five-point Likert response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). For the sake of analysis strongly disagree and disagree as well as strongly agree and agree are combined. The reliability of the instrument is Cronbach's Alpha iso.914.

Employee engagement instrument” was adapted from Gallup survey (2006) and Towers Perrin (2003), containing 12 items. The item was presented to the respondents as a statement to which they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree along a five-point Likert response scale (1 = disagree(*Disengaged*), 2 = *nether disagree nor Agree(not engaged)*, 3 = *Agree(Engaged)*). Reliability Statistics of Reliability Statistics of job stress is.0.615).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Extent of Wasteful Management practices

As it is revealed in Table 1 26(47 %) confirmed the manifestation of wasteful managerial practices while 12(22%) do not agree. The rest 16 (29%) of the respondents are preferred not to voice their agreement or disagreement. when we see the prevalence of the individual dimensions of wasteful managerial practices: Organizational politics 22(55%), Confusing message 21(42 %), Unproductive meeting 24(43%), Hypocrisy 27(49%) and Withholding information 26(50%) of the respondents perceived the existence of these practices .

Table1: Wasteful Management practice

	Agree		neither Agree nor disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
	29	55	13	24	12	21
Organizational politics						
Confusing message	21	42	15	28	12	19
Unproductive meeting	24	43	17	31	16	30
Hypocrisy	27	49	15	28	13	24
Withholding information	27	50	16	35	9	16
wasteful Management malpractice	26	47	16	29	12	22

Extent of Employees Engagement

Table2 shows that 48 percent of the respondents confirm as they are disengaged; 37 present of the respondents are “Not engaged”, while the rest 15 percent of them are **engaged**. If these figures are an accurate representation of employee behavior, it means that energy and enthusiasm of 85 percent of medical staff (a tremendous amount) are not available to their Hospital .they are disengaged **or are not** engaged. This study is also in concordant with previous studies of Towers, Perrin (2003), in which the amount of engaged employees was only 17% of the respondents, the amount of moderately engaged was 64%, and the amount of disengaged workers was 19%. Findings of The Gallup Organization (2006) also showed that engaged employees 27% of the respondents, not-engaged 59%, and actively disengaged 14%.

Table 2 level of employees' extent engagement

Total	Disengaged		Not engaged		engaged	
	Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		agree	
	Percent		Percent		Percent	

The relationship between Wasteful Managerial Practices and Employees' Engagement

The following Table 4 clearly reveals that *Wasteful Managerial Practices* has significant negative relationship with *Employee engagement* ($r=-.372^{**}$). Regarding to components of Wasteful Managerial Practice “Confusing message” and “Hypocrisy” both are significantly and negatively correlated with “Employee Engagement”. But *Organizational politics* and *Withholdings information* are found not significantly correlated with *Employee Engagement*.

Table 4: Correlations among wasteful managerial malpractices, Employees' stress and intention to leave

	wasteful Management practices	Organizational Politics	Confusing Message	Unproductive Meetings	Hypocrisy	Withholding Information
Employees Engagement	-.372**	.084	-.431**	-.141	-.271*	.018

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variance of Employees' Engagement Explained By Wasteful Managerial Practices

To see if Wasteful Managerial Practices significantly predicted employees' Engagement, *stepwise regression analysis* is used. As Table 5 reveals Wasteful Managerial Practices explained only 12.2 percent of the variation in employees' Engagement, ($R^2 = .139$), Adjusted $R^2 = .122$, at $p .006$). The Table also reveals that *Confusing Message* emerged as the major significant predictor of employees' engagement ($\beta = -.431$, $P < .001$), and *Unproductive meeting* is the second significant predictor of employees' engagement ($\beta = -.279$, $P < .00$). The other wasteful managerial practice dimensions were excluded.

Table 5: regression Analysis between Wasteful managerial practices and employees' engagement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.		
1	.372	.139	.122	.006		
Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	2.064	.117		17.578	.000	
	Confusing Message	-.150	.044	-.431	-3.445	.001
2 (Constant)	2.359	.165		14.137	.000	
	Confusing Message	-.177	.044	-.507	-4.046	.000
	Unproductive Meeting	-.072	.032	-.279	-2.226	.030

Conclusion

This the study has revealed that wasteful managerial practices is common in the hospital. Almost all of the medical staff are more or less disengaged or not engaged. The result of the study also shows that *Confusing Message* emerged as the major significant predictor of Employees' Engagement and *Unproductive Meeting* is the second significant predictor of employees' engagement.

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